

Britain and Ireland, volume 7(2) (Harley Books, 1991). It is not my place as editor of this journal to attempt to redefine the British List. However, I would draw a distinction between this and directly calling a species “British” – hence the final four words of qualification which Mr Burrow agreed to being added to the title of his second paper on page 136. It may indeed be time to show this fallacy the killing bottle – have we any volunteers?

Some field observations on three uncommon hoverflies – *Doros profuges* (Harris), *Microdon mutabilis* (L.) and *Cheilosia chrysocoma* (Mg.) (Dip.: Syrphidae) in Lancashire, 1991-1996.

***Doros profuges* (Harris) (= *conopseus* auct.)**

After being shown the habitat which *Doros* requires (in the south of England) and also being lucky enough to see three specimens in early June 1990 I decided that I had to see more of this rare and fascinating beast. I have been able to get access to old Lancashire records thanks to Darwyn Sumner and managed to find the site described. However, the beast has not been seen in the area (Grange-over-Sands) since those early records.

In 1993 Simon Heyho discovered *Doros* across the bay in the area of Leighton Moss. Two days afterwards I had also observed the animal, hovering low in the bramble just out of reach, which seems to be standard behaviour for it.

Since June 1993 I have been lucky enough to observe for various lengths of time approximately 20 specimens within four square kilometres of the original site. The area is well-drained soil on limestone with occasional limestone pavement and many ant nests. In the south the site is on well-drained chalk. Both sites have plenty of low bramble. However I am not very familiar with the southern site so my observations are restricted to the northern sites only.

- *Doros* is most of the time a slow deliberate flyer hovering in or only just above bramble. However, when disturbed it flies extremely quickly in the opposite direction.
- In flight it bears a remarkable resemblance to the genus *Odynerus* (Hymenoptera: Eumenidae) and can very easily be overlooked.
- When at rest it holds its wings anywhere between 90 and 45 degrees to the abdomen.
- I have recently observed two separate females surveying *Lasius niger* nests. However ovipositing behaviour was not observed. *Doros* was constantly being harried by *Microdon mutabilis* which is very common in the area.
- All observations have been between 6 and 26 June (could this suggest an ant relationship?).

Microdon mutablis

This hoverfly is very common in the north of the county. As an example, on 16.vi.1995 I gave up counting after reaching 50 individuals in the three-hour period. I observed and photographed a female ovipositing at and into the entrance of a *Lasius* nest. The whole operation only took about an hour or so and at no time was the fly disturbed by the ants coming and going from the nest entrance, which she seemed to be filling completely with her abdomen. When she had finished, she flew around the nest a few times then landed just off to one side and rested in the sunlight. All areas in which *M. mutablis* were observed are well-drained on limestone, though Stubbs (1993, *British Hoverflies, an illustrated identification guide*, BENHS) mentions damp habitat.

Chielosia chrysocoma

While I was photographing *Criorina ranunculi* (Panzer) in early May 1993, I observed what seemed to be an example of the bee fly *Bombylius major* hovering over a patch of bare earth a few yards to my left. However, on closer inspection I was pleasantly surprised to see an example of *C. chrysocoma*. As I moved myself into a position to photograph it, it disappeared into the distance. The area was near Leighton Moss and is covered with the birch, ash and sycamore on a hillside with a clear view of one of the pools. I was obviously quite upset that I had missed the opportunity, when into the same area flew two examples of *B. major* which rested on the bare earth in the sunlight. A few moments later, in came *C. chrysocoma*, and started hovering about six inches above one of the *Bombylius*. After a few seconds, it started to drop until it came into contact with the back of *Bombylius* and then moved slowly across to the other *Bombylius* and did the same thing. At no time did either of the bee-flies move. A few moments later, another *C. chrysocoma* came into the area at high speed, very low and disturbed the other three insects which all disappeared very rapidly.—LANCE GORMAN, 2 School House, Alston, nr. Longridge, Preston PR3 3BJ.

DENIS F. OWEN

We were saddened to learn of the recent death of Denis Owen after a short illness. Denis made a number of valuable contributions to the pages of this journal and his passing is a great loss to entomology. It is hoped that a short obituary will be published in a future issue of this journal.